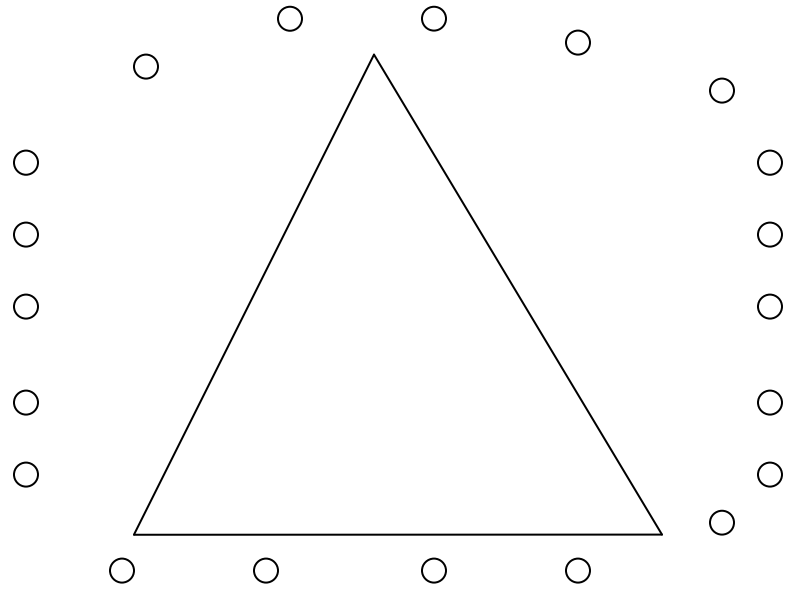
The Rescue of the Polynomial Princess



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Introduction

The map before him showed nothing new. To the East was nothingness—the edge of the world. To the North and South were Harshlands for twenty or more miles; beyond them were other border kingdoms also vying for power and recognition from the Five Leagues. He paused over the contours of the Circle of Whole in the South. Recent negotiations with its ruler made them vitally important to his own strategies. In the west was the Trade Road that eventually came to the gates of the Empire. The center of the map showed his kingdom in all its glory. The dashes and lines of the map were as familiar as the feel of his scepter. The Kingdom of Radians was small but perfect.

And about to become much larger….

A noise behind him and Priest-King Triagontacus quickly folded the map and set it aside the throne. Moments later, his court advisor, Icose, came rushing into his chambers.

"Your Highness! Princess Rai-Symmetra is gone; we think she was kidnapped!"

Triagontacus sat for a moment composing himself, and then leaned forward in his throne. "Tell me everything you know."

Everything was happening as planned.

This adventure is designed for four to six lower-class characters. While the adventure works best for characters who are Isosceles criminals or Irregulars of the Kingdom of Radians, "Rescue of the Polynomial Princess" can be adapted to lower-class individuals found on the Trade Road or passing near the city-state.

In this adventure the characters are drawn into a political play by the Priest-King Triagontacus. Beyond the Harshlands to the south is the Circle of Whole, a small kingdom ruled by Priest-King D'Griez II. Triagontacus recently agreed to give his daughter, Princess Rai-Symmetra, to D'Griez in marriage. Triagontacus decided to have his own daughter kidnapped and murdered and plans to accuse the denizens of the Harshlands between the two kingdoms of her death. He wants the Circle of Whole to provide their armies to help him "avenge" his daughter, and then hopes to take a majority of the land for his own kingdom, believing that the King of Whole will let him do so without a fight.

Triagontacus sent three of his best and most loyal guards to kidnap the princess while she was out on her morning ride. They were supposed to travel halfway down the path to

the Kingdom of Whole, kill her, and leave her body on the path before returning to the palace. He must then hire a group of unsavory individuals (the characters) to find his daughter with a promise of a reward of prestige. After the second group goes into the Harshlands to search for the princess he will wait a day before sending a “grief-stricken” letter to King D’Griez, informing him of the need for his armies. After two more days King Triagontacus will prepare his army to march into the Harshlands. King Triagontacus will accuse the characters of the murder, and associate them with the riffraff of the Harshlands. He assumes the characters will flee once they see the body of the princess, and doesn’t care either way.

The king has been betrayed, however, by his royal adviser, Icose. He had the king’s guards killed and replaced them with three of his own men. Icose hopes to marry the princess himself and take over the throne of the kingdom. The characters play into his plan as well, to be killed by his men and found by Icose with planted evidence that implicates the king.

Icose’s men were supposed to leave her alive on the path for Icose to find, but his own plot is thwarted when a local group of Amazons finds her and kills her captors, taking her to live with them. Now the characters are about to fall headlong into a series of mislaid schemes with nearly everyone wanting to set them up for the fall.

LAWS FOR FEMALES OF THE KINGDOM OF RADIANS

Females in this city-state have an alternative to uttering the peace cry found in other kingdoms. If they strap themselves with chains that end with blocks of wood, they rattle pleasingly as they walk, ensuring their presence is heard. A female is permitted to forgo both chains and the peace cry if she is carried in a litter outside of her home, one she must not exit until she returns to her abode. Only the most esteemed individuals can allot manpower and materials to litter-bearing their wives and daughters, so most females in the city-state wear chains.

Quick Outline of the Rescue of the Polynomial Princess

Part One: The characters are gathered together from the riffraff of society. Priest-King Triagontacus meets with them and explains their mission to find the princess, warning that it must be done covertly. If they do not find her within three days their lives are forfeit and he will send his troops after them. The characters are escorted to the border of the kingdom where a trail is obvious enough.

Part Two: The characters venture further south into the Harshlands and the trees and brush thicken. Various colors become prominent. Random encounters with strange creatures and animals increase. The trail eventually leads to the bodies of three strangers and evidence of a fight. If the characters dally too long, they are passed by a fast individual—the messenger on his way to the Kingdom of Whole.

Part Three: Although more difficult to trace, the new trail leads to a scouting party of Amazons who would rather attack than talk. If persuaded, the Amazons lead the characters to their village where they meet Princess Rai-Symmetra and learn she has joined the Amazons. She knows it was her father who initially kidnapped her and that Icose was going to use her to turn the kingdom against King Triagontacus.

Part Four: The characters must decide whether to force her to go back, which means they must fight the tribe. They are invited to join the Amazons as well, but if they do nothing or stay there, then they get attacked by the coming armies of both the Kingdom of Radians and of Whole.

PART ONE

The characters can be found already together as a team or gathered together throughout the area by Triagontacus's network of spies and officers to be introduced for the first time at the Priest-King's palace. No matter how or where they are located, they should all have knowledge of the Kingdom of Radians, its unique laws regarding females, and the name of King Triagontacus. The characters are first brought (politely or by force) to the four-sided armory, which sits next to the similarly built palace. When all the characters are found, they are escorted to the throne room of the king.

The King of Radians

Once the characters have been gathered in the throne room, their escorts tell them to stay quiet and leave. Read aloud:

The room is four-sided and has a single large chair in the center of it. Behind you is the entrance. On the other side of the chair is a small staircase leading to a second door. There are two guards, one at each doorway. One disappears into the higher doorway. Moments later a large, nearly circular polygon enters, followed by a slightly less impressive one. The guard returns to stand at the doorway. The

larger polygon sits on the throne facing you.

“The kingdom needs your services. My daughter, the Princess Rai-Symmetra, was kidnapped by bandits. She was on her way to the park in her litter when she was snatched. The kidnappers injured both of her litter-bearers, but one saw them running with the princess towards the path that leads South into the Harshlands. I need you to go and find her, defeat her kidnappers, and return her to the palace before anyone notices she is gone.”

No ransom demands have been made yet, but the king would like to have her located and returned before her disappearance is made public. If asked why all the secrecy, the king explains, “She is to marry the king of a nearby city-state in two weeks; her disappearance would upset our current treaties.” The description of the bandits is “three Isosceles Triangles with daggers” who carried the princess away.

King Triagontacus gives the characters three days before he “regrettably” has to send his armies out looking for her, at which point he no longer guarantees the characters’ safety. He promises a great reward, hinting at new status or possibly surgery for Irregulars or those who wish to be more in life. He does not take no for an answer.

Once they agree to go find the princess, he has Icose—his royal adviser—outfit them each with dingy swords and, if requested, grants a single pistol, as well as six projectiles, to be used among the group. Icose and several guards bring the characters to the southern Gate of the Kingdom, where several cannons protect the city-state from barbarians and monsters. Read aloud:

Beyond the gate is green—trees and vegetation as far as the eye can see. A brown path leads between them. Just beyond the gate is a white object on the path.”

It appears to be a small round white circle and the Icose or the guards confirm (if asked) that it is a part of the Princess’s royal attire. The characters are heading in the right direction.

Priest-King Triagontacus
Physical: 2
Mental: 3
Emotional: 3
Social: 4
Spiritual: 2
Hit Points 20
Traits
Clever, Calm, Leader, Circle

Background: King Triagontacus was sent by the Empire to take control over the Circle of Radians after the last king’s health failed nearly forty years ago. He has worked hard to bring the Circle to esteem recognizable by the Leagues. Unfortunately he is whispered to have bad luck; all of his sons were killed in combat or died young of frailty. Three daughters were born before his wife succumbed to

“madness” and had to be destroyed. In order to keep insurrection low, he allowed his daughters to work with the women of the community to find new ways to give the females freedom without risking the lives of the men. He does this not for concern of the women, but because he knows the women influence the men more than they want to admit. His youngest daughter, Princess Rai-Symmetra, is a favorite among the other females and the king hopes her kidnapping, once revealed, will push the women to encourage their husbands to “do something,” and rally the kingdom to war.

Icose, Royal Adviser
Physical: 2
Mental: 4
Emotional: 2
Social: 4
Spiritual: 2
Hit Points 15
Traits
Alert, Intelligent, Socially Perceptive, Circle
Background: Icose was distantly related to the now-deceased wife of Priest-King Triagontacus—a brother of her sibling’s husband. He always felt that the Priest-King from the Empire was a usurper to the throne of the Kingdom of Radians. He believed marrying one of the princesses would grant him a claim to the throne. As the first, then the second daughters were sent off to marry peers of Triagontacus, Icose realized that the king was never going to allow Icose any closer to the throne. Now he bides his time, waiting for Triagontacus to make a fatal error.

PART TWO

As the characters head further into the Harshlands, they find the path gets smaller and the trees and brush become thicker until everything is foggy and green. Strange sounds (squawks, random thumping or any other number of sudden noises you can do to keep the players jumpy) make this region unwelcoming. As there is no night, the characters can only get the sense that the end of the first day passes and the time for sleep comes. They may choose to take a break or not.

Random Encounters

Any number of unsavory or strange individuals exists out here in the Harshlands. One advantage the characters have over other Flatlanders is that they themselves are at the bottom of the heap, possibly with Irregulars among them. Stick Figures, Irregulars, and even Third-Dimensional Beings would be more curious than violent to the characters, although they may not necessarily be helpful either. Ghosts, Squiggles, and T-Things are dangerous but avoidable by standing next to the trees and pretending to be one of them or otherwise distracting the creature and leading it away from the party.

Following the Trail

Eventually the party comes to a fork in the path. The signpost shows that the well-worn, more southerly path leads to the city-state of the Circle of Whole. The southwesterly path leads eventually to the Kingdom of Assax. Just beyond the two choices, another small circle is found on the path to the Circle of Whole. This could lead to speculation as to whether the Circle of Whole is involved with the kidnapping.

Don't discourage the players from any ideas they might have as to what their characters are going to find at the end of the journey. Let them postulate. Give the player who guesses the best a cookie when the adventure is over.

The Clearing

Not too much long after the fork in the path the characters see evidence of fighting. Read aloud:

The path opens up to form a round clearing. Wheel tracks indicate this is where carts are pulled off the trail. There is something distinctly red in the clearing. A red line sticks up from the ground, but a closer look reveals it is an arrow sticking up from a body.

The red line is an arrow imbedded in an acute triangle. Have the players roll. Those who are observant will see the triangle before it is stepped on.

Further investigation finds there are two bodies in the clearing, both of which were once sharp acute triangles. Both shapes are carrying daggers as well as the circular objects that the characters believe were part of the princess's attire. The characters also find strewn around the bodies a number of badges from the King Triagontacus's personal

guard. Careful checks of the entire clearing assure the party that the princess is not among the lines. If they start looking at the southwesterly side of the path, they find a hole in the brush and, just beyond, a third dead triangle with a circle from Princess Rai's outfit lying nearby.

The Messenger
Physical: 4
Mental: 2
Emotional: 2
Social: 2
Spiritual: 2
Hit Points: 15
Traits
Very Agile

The Messenger
The day after sending the characters out on their supposedly futile search, the king sends his fastest messenger to the Kingdom of Whole bearing a missive informing Priest-King D'Griez II of his fiancé's demise. It beseeches the King of Whole to send his armies toward the Circle of Radians as fast as possible, so they can take the evil-doers by surprise. The message also states that the brigands had daggers and were carrying round stones from the princess's outfit.

The southern path is the safest route so the messenger should overtake the character's party just after they leave the main path heading down the trail to the Amazons' encampment. If the characters dawdle in the clearing the messenger could hurry by the party. Or, the characters hear the messenger pass just as they start down the little trail. The Messenger does not know what message he carries. He will not stop unless forced.

PART THREE

The faint trail through the thicker Harshlands leads the characters into an Amazon scouting party who were returning to the clearing on the path to clean up the bodies and the weapons. They see the characters examining the clearing and hide to determine if the characters will find the trail. When the characters start into the Harshlands, the Amazons set up an ambush. They are dubious of the characters' intentions and only allow them to see the princess if they give over the pistol. When the characters agree, the Amazons allow the characters to return with them to their small enclave of huts in the Harshlands. They finally meet Princess Rai-Symmetra, who is decked out in brightly colored leaves and dyes with a spear in her hand. She does not wish to return to the Kingdom of Radians; the kidnappers from Icose told her that her father had planned to have her killed. The characters have a day before the army begins its approach.

The Amazons

Once the characters decide to follow the fainter trail, ask what their order is. The one with the pistol should have special consideration.

Read aloud:
This is not so much a path as a trace where someone moved aside bushes and weaved around the trees. The path is single file and leads you deeper into the Harshlands. Now amongst the greens you see reds, yellows, and even orange hues.

After a time of moving between the trees, a red spear strikes the ground in front of the lead person. A voice cries out from somewhere in front of them, "Halt! Leave now or you will be killed!" Voice recognition indicates a female voice spoke. They identify themselves as Amazons if asked.

Although Isosceles Triangles and other odd shapes are usually more obtuse than Regulars and Polygons, common sense should indicate to the party that they are at a disadvantage. There are five Amazons in the scouting party and they are not dyed or decorated. They are armed with spears and bows. If the characters ask about the princess, they are told "she's with us now, so leave." If the characters try to attack, the Amazons will attempt to wound rather than kill, especially if they characters mentioned the princess first. Belligerency towards their kind is not welcome and is met with barely restrained violence. Depending on the type of campaign

the characters could be knocked out and brought to the village unwilling.

The party's best bet is trying to convince the Amazons that they only want to talk to the princess and find out what's going on. The female voice insists that the characters remove any projectile weapons among them and drop them on the ground. Without peace cries or waving, a nearly invisible female comes and picks them up and gets out of harm's way before turning so she can be seen. She then has the characters follow her down the trail. The other Amazons flanks the characters, the two behind them maintaining an eye-on view so they are difficult to detect. Any questions about the princess are not answered, beyond "she's fine," and "you can ask her when you see her."

Amazon Scouting Party (5)
Physical: 3
Mental: 2
Emotional: 3
Social 2
Spiritual: 2

Hit Points: 11

Traits

Unrestricted Female, Combat Prowess

Meeting the Princess

They enter the sparse village of Amazons and are taken to see the Queen Mother and the now colorful princess.

Read Aloud:

The Amazon village is made up of six or seven four-sided huts in a clearing. There are many females here, decorated with dyes and colored leaves. There are also some men—Irregulars, Isosceles Triangles, and even a couple of Regulars. They keep their distance but you feel all eyes watching you. The Amazons you were traveling with lead you to one hut in particular. A fairly tall Woman with many decorations comes out, followed by a smaller, but also multi-dyed female.

The large woman introduces herself, "I am Queen Woman of Southeastern Female Tribe." Queen Woman looks pointedly over at the smaller female, who steps forward proudly.

"I am Princess Rai-Symmetra."

After learning the characters' names and greeting them politely, she asks what they are doing here and who sent them. Upon hearing Priest-King Triagontacus's name she cuts them off.

"He is no father of mine. The King was going to have me kidnapped and murdered to take advantage of my coming matrimonial to the King of Whole. He is going to join

his army with theirs to destroy all of the denizens of the Harshlands between them and then take the land for himself. Lucky for me, Icose, the King's Adviser, had his men kidnap me instead."

She explained Icose wanted to use her as leverage to start a war between the two kingdoms and marry her himself, setting Icose to head a revolution against the king. In the end, he would use his marriage to her to take the kingdom for himself.

"You were a part of this plan from the beginning. The King was going to use you as stand-ins for his kidnappers, accusing you of the deed. Icose told his men to wait for you in the clearing and kill you, planting evidence that showed you were the king's men."

She knows this because the three kidnappers told her that she was safe as long as she agreed to marry Icose. She trusts Icose about as much as her father, and she has never been interested in him.

It was only by chance that an Amazon hunting party came across the princess and the three kidnappers waiting in the clearing. The kidnappers fought but the Amazons won and took the princess with them. It doesn't seem likely that the characters will convince her to go back to her father, but they have a day to try before the King's army starts marching towards them.

Princess Rai-Symmetra
Physical: 2
Mental: 3
Emotional: 4
Social: 2
Spiritual: 2
Hit Points: 15
Traits
Alert, Determined, Passionate, Female

Background: Princess Rai-Symmetra is the youngest child of Priest-King Triagontacus and the last of three surviving daughters. She used her status as the King's daughter to influence the local female population in supporting the king and kingdom, mostly by throwing their support behind their husbands and reducing domestic fighting to a minimum. Because of this, Princess Rai was well-loved by the women of the kingdom and fairly tolerated by the men. She was accustomed to being used by her father but his latest plan to have her destroyed to gain land for the kingdom has her outraged.

Queen Mother
Physical: 4
Mental: 2
Emotional: 3
Social: 3
Spiritual: 2
Hit Points: 18
Traits
Strong, Pointy, Calm, Leader, Unrestricted Female, Combat Prowess

Background: Although the Queen Mother will put the needs of the tribe first, she has her own reasons for wanting vengeance on the Priest-

King Triagontacus. She was originally from the Circle of Radians and was a maid of the young queen. She believes Triagontacus had the queen murdered after she bore him his third daughter. The king had the Queen Mother arrested to keep her quiet, but she escaped and fled into the Harshlands. Other members of the kingdom, especially women or those who angered the king or knew of his misdeeds, also ran away and joined the Queen Mother. Although she does not yet see an opportunity she will follow any plan that may result in the removal of King Triagontacus.

PART FOUR

The characters must decide whether to try and force Princess Rai to go back to her father (or Icose). This is not going to be easy. The Amazons have already accepted her as a member of their tribe so if they choose this route they will have a massive fight and if they sneak away with the princess the Amazons will hunt them down and kill them without remorse. A second option is staying with the tribe. The characters are invited by Queen Woman to join the Amazons, and it is an opportunity for the party to have some protection from the Kingdom of Radians, but this also means they may have to fight the coming armies. The characters could just leave, which means their role in the game is over, although they probably should never return to this region of Flatlands again.

What is the Plan?

The Amazons already know the Army of Radians is coming and, if they intercepted the Messenger, they know the Army of Whole is coming as well (if not, Amazon Scouts along the path will warn the rest of the tribe when both armies come together in the clearing). The Amazons will not discuss any further plans until the characters agree to become members of the tribe. If they don't agree, they will be taken back to the clearing and left there to their own devices.

At an opportune moment, read aloud:

The Queen Mother steps in front of you. "You also have been betrayed by the King of Radians. We of the tribe invite you to stay here, with us, as members of the Southeasterly Female Tribe. Should you agree, we will give you refuge from the army and stand as your family against the Kingdom of Radians. If you do not wish to join us, you must leave immediately, so that we can prepare ourselves for war."

Let the players choose among themselves what they want their characters to do regarding joining the Southeastern Female Tribe. Give them plenty of time to work it out.

They choose to join the tribe:
Once the characters reveal their decision to stay, the other males and females greet them warmly. The Queen Mother then reveals their plans to attack only as long as necessary to allow the more fragile women and children to escape, and then flee deeper into the Harshlands to the east until they reach the edge of Flatlands. From there they will attempt to move north or south behind either kingdom. The Tribe has about 100 fighting individuals all armed with spears, bows, and swords of varying degrees of antiquity.

"But," the Queen Mother sighs, "I wish there was a better way."

The characters can try at this time to come up with a better plan. Queen Mother will listen to any reasonable idea.

They may actually have the best chance with the Priest-King of the Circle of Whole. Princess Rai liked King D'Griez II when they met and has no quarrel with him. Although the message he was sent by the "grieving" King Triagontacus was of her demise and the need to avenge her, he could be easily swayed by a living princess to attack the Army of Radians for its insult. As long as proof of Triacontagus's betrayal is shown, the King of Whole will turn against the King of Radians, thereby saving the Amazons.

If they choose to fight they can utilize the information given by the princess—the Royal Adviser Icose will enter the clearing first to take Princess Rai-Symmetra into his possession. The Amazons can set up a trap to capture him instead and threaten to turn him over to the King to get his cooperation.

Scouts (3)
Physical: 3
Mental: 3
Emotional: 2
Social: 2
Spiritual: 2
Hit Points: 10
Traits
Agile, Alert
Armed with Crossbows

They choose to leave: Any type of negotiation with the king will likely end in their imprisonment and/or death. They may have more of a chance with Icose, although the king is difficult to circumvent as long as he lives. They could decide on their own to go to Priest King D'Griez II and reveal the King of Radians' treachery, but they'd have better luck with the princess at their side.

The Battle

After one more day the scouts of the Army of Radians, along with Icose, enter the clearing. The Army of Radians (and the Army of Whole if the messenger got through) converges on the clearing ready for battle several hours later. The Amazons see the soldiers before they themselves are seen and report on the army's movements to Queen Mother.

The Army has the advantage of size (1000 per army) and weaponry (crossbows, good swords, and two cannons). Their disadvantages are that they are in the open, cannot run and hide readily, rely too heavily on their cannons, and do not know the lay of the land.

The Tribe can snipe at the army all day and never be seen. They can make booby traps and hiding places. They also know where food is. Unlike the proud army, the Amazons can continually retreat, drawing the soldiers deeper into the Harshlands. All soldiers are average and there are 10 Captains (Polygons) and 40 Sergeants (Equilateral Triangles).

If the Army of Whole does not come, the Army of Radians will fall apart after half of its soldiers die or five of their captains. If the Princess reveals herself the army stops fighting but the characters are still not safe unless they can convince the soldiers completely that the King set up a trap. The Army of Whole will

stop fighting immediately if Princess Rai-Symmetra is found alive, and is more likely to be persuaded.

The characters live happily ever after if one of the following happen:

- In the event that the Priest-King D'Griez II gets his intended, the characters are allowed to come live at the Kingdom of Whole or go in peace.
- If Priest-King Triagontacus is removed from office and Icose does not succeed him, the characters are rewarded by the Princess who grants them anything they want. The Queen Mother brings her tribe back to the Circle of Radians and reveals her old identity. Justice is served.
- If the Amazons successfully escape with most of their numbers intact they allow the characters to live with them happily ever after or go in peace as they wish.

Produced By: T. Craig Drake
Written By: Jennifer Schoonover
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